

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 IO-14 ACDA-19 AID-20

DRC-01 /126 W

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O R 241031Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2275

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

CONFIDENTIAL TEL AVIV 2432

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, IS

SUBJ: ISRAELI DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION

REF: TEL AVIV 2410

SUMMARY. ONLY MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS SINCE TEL AVIV 2410 HAVE BEEN A) MRS MEIR'S CONFIRMATION THAT SHE WOULD CONTINUE SERVING AS CARETAKER PRIME MINISTER UNTIL NEW ELECTION IN EVENTUALITY THAT RABIN IS UNABLE TO FORM NEW GOVERNMENT, AND B) STATEMENT BY CITIZENS RIGHTS MOVEMENT (CRM) SPOKESMAN THAT IT IS UNWILLING TO SERVE IN NEW GOVERNMENT, EVIDENTLY ELIMINATING POSSIBILITY OF RABIN'S FORMING MAJORITY (61 MEMBER) GOVERNMENT CONSISTING OF LABOR ALIGNMENT, INDEPENDENT LIBERALS AND CRM. END SUMMARY.

1. ON EVE OF A SOMBRE 26 TH INDEPENDENCE DAY, ISRAEL'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP HAS SET THE STAGE FOR NEW ROUND OF COALITION NEGOTIATIONS TO DETERMINE WHETHER RABIN CAN FORM NEW GOVERNMENT OR WHETHER CURRENT CARETAKER CABINET WILL

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CONTINUE IN OFFICE UNTIL NEW ELECTION (REFTEL). PRESIDENT KATZIR

WILL MEET RABIN APRIL 26 TO CHARGE HIM FORMALLY WITH TASK OF FORMING NEW GOVERNMENT, SETTING IN MOTION STATUTORY THREE-WEEK PHASE OF CONSULTATIONS.

2. LABOR PARTY STRATEGY IS TO CONCLUDE COALITION NEGOTIATIONS RAPIDLY, DETERMINING IN NEXT THREE WEEKS WHETHER BASIS EXISTS FOR FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT, AND IN EFFECT SETTING MAY 17 DEADLINE ON NEGOTIATING PROCESS. FINANCE MINISTER SAPIR HAS TOLD US THAT HE WILL AGAIN HEAD LABOR ALIGNMENT NEGOTIATING TEAM WHICH WILL BEGIN ITS WORK IMMEDIATELY AFTER INDEPENDENCE DAY. SAPIR SAID THAT HE WAS DETERMINED TO AVOID PROTRACTED NEGOTIATION, SUCH AS HAD OCCURRED AFTER DECEMBER ELECTION, WHICH WOULD ONLY SAP RABIN'S POLITICAL SUPPORT.

3. LABOR PARTY SECRETARY GENERAL YADLIN, HEADING DELEGATION WHICH CALLED ON PRESIDENT KATZIR APRIL 23, SAID THAT HIS PARTY WOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO REFORM OUTGOING COALITION WITHIN 21 DAY PERIOD. BUT MAPAM KNESSET MEMBER DOV ZAKIN IN SAME DELEGATION HAS UNDERLINED TO US AND TO PRESS PROBLEMS WHICH LIE AHEAD, STRESSING THAT MAPAM WAS UNWILLING TO COUNTENANCE FURTHER CONCESSIONS TO NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY (NRP) AND ALSO UNWILLING TO TAKE PART IN NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT.

4. LABOR ALIGNMENT'S POTENTIAL COALITION PARTNERS, STAKING OUT THEIR OPENING POSITIONS, HAVE ALSO STRESSED HURDLES IN WAY OF FORMING NEW GOVERNMENT. NRP LEADER YITZHAK RAPHAEL REITERATED HIS PARTY'S STAND ON NEED FOR UNITY GOVERNMENT AND CONCESSIONS ON RELIGIOUS ISSUES. NRP KNESSET DELEGATION CHAIRMAN AVARAHAM MELAMED HAS INDICATED THAT NRP MIGHT AGAIN COCEDE ON UNITY GOVERNMENT DEMAND IF IT OBTAINED SATISFACTION ON WHO IS A JEW ISSUE.

5. AS REGARD POSSIBILITY OF FORMING 61 MEMBER GOVERNMENT WITH INDEPENDENT LIBERALS AND SHULAMIT ALONI'S CITIZENS RIGHTS MOVEMENT (CRM), SPOKESMAN FOR LATTER HAS DOUSED HOPES RE THIS OPTION BY STATING THAT HIS PARTY WOULD NOT JOIN NEW COALITION AND BELIEVES THAT INSTEAD NEW ELECTION IS REQUIRED. CRM MAINTAINS THAT RABIN MUST GET MANDATE, NOT JUST FROM LABOR PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE, BUT FROM ELECTORATE.

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6. INDEPENDENT LIBERAL PARTY SECRETARY YITZHAK BARKAI SAID IN TV INTERVIEW THAT ILP REGARDED MINORITY GOVERNMENT AS INAPPROPRIATE. HE SAID ILP BELIEVED THERE WAS LITTLE PROSPECT OF AVOIDING NEW ELECTION AFTER RELEASE OF FINAL AGRANAT REPORT. ILP MINISTER HAUSNER STATED THAT NEW ELECTION SEEMED ONLY WAY TO RESOLVE CRISIS OF PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN NATION'S LEADERSHIP.

7. LIKUD LEADERSHIP HAS ALSO EXPRESSED ITS JUDGMENT THAT RABIN IS UNLIKELY TO SUCCEED IN FORMING NEW GOVERNMENT. LIKUD LEADER BEGIN STATED THAT, IF AND WHEN RABIN RETURNS HIS MANDATE TO PRESIDENT KATZIR, LIKUD WILL DEMAND OPPORTUNITY TO TRY TO FORM CABINET. BEGIN CHARGED THAT LEADERSHIP'S REAL INTENTION WAS TO KEEP CARETAKER GOVERNMENT IN OFFICE UNTIL ELECTION AT END OF YEAR, AND ADDED THAT LIKUD WOULD " FIGHT THIS DESIGN."

8. WITH CARETAKER GOVERNMENT CONTINUING IN OFFICE, MRS MEIR APRIL 23 BROKE HER SELF-IMPOSED SILENCE AS REGARDS DOMESTIC POLITICAL SCENE, CONGRATULATING RABIN AND PERES ON MANNER IN WHICH ELECTORAL COMPETITION WAS CONDUCTED AND EXPRESSING HOPE THAT RABIN WOULD SUCCEED IN FORMING NEW GOVERNMENT. IN ANSWER TO INTERVIEWER'S QUESTION ABOUT HER OWN INTENTIONS IF RABIN FAILED TO FORM NEW GOVERNMENT, MRS MEIR SAID THAT SHE WOULD HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO MEET HER CONSTITUTIONAL OBLIGATION OF CONTINUING AS CARE TAKER PRIME MINISTER UNTIL NEW ELECTION COULD BE HELD. SHE STATED THAT NEW ELECTION, IF IT OCCURS, COULD NOT TAKE PLACE BEFORE PUBLICATION OF FINAL AGRANAT COMMISSION REPORT. (THERE IS STILL NO INDICATION WHEN FINAL REPORT MAY APPEAR.)

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRIME MINISTER, POLITICAL SITUATION, POLITICAL PARTIES, NEGOTIATIONS, ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 APR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974TELAV02432
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740096-0368
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740416/aaaaaodd.tel
Line Count: 136
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: TEL AVIV 2410
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13-Aug-2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <13 FEB 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ISRAELI DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, IS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005